



The Britannia Royal Naval College Hosts the U.S. Naval Academy



The United States Naval Academy recently invaded Dartmouth England from September 21st through the 25th on request of the Britannia Royal Naval College to join in their Centenary celebration. As part of the year long celebration the BRNC rugby team hosted USNA to hearty competition on the pitch and shared brotherhood off.

Navy took advantage of the trip across the pond by scheduling their first game on the Queen's shores versus the Fisherman of the Brixham RFC.

Upon arrival in Dartmouth the BRNC rolled out the red carpet treating Navy to fine quarters, remarkable subsistence and true camaraderie. The sloping BRNC campus overlooks the Dart River and the town of Dartmouth and rugby fitness came in handy scaling the terrain to and from the pitch.

The day after Navy chased jet lag from their bodies with an up tempo practice, they traveled to the nearby town of Brixham for a Friday evening game. The contest featured Navy's B-side vs. the Fishermen Cs.

The match began fairly even with both sides having scoring opportunities and Brixham capitalizing on two without conversions for a halftime score of 10-nil. Brixham displayed their experience in the second half having made a few adjustments and consistently rebuilding and refusing to over commit to rucks and mauls. Navy Bs were not able to respond in kind and allowed five second half tries, two of which were converted.

In the end the Fishermen sported 41 points to Navy's nil. Experience and years dominated novice youth. Navy Bs will do well to heed the lessons Brixham presented.

The following day featured a dismissal of the shared pleasantries as USNA's A-side battled BRNC's As in what turned out to be a highly contested match that was not decided until the final minutes. Navy scored quickly, without conversion, but could not duplicate a try although they spent the better part of the next twenty minutes in the BRNC end. The Brits rallied their defensive efforts the most when the Yanks threatened most. In the final moments of the half scrumhalf Graham Cleveland failed to touch down the ball as the BRNC held him up in try. USNA 5, BRNC nil.



USNA Winger Jimmy Markel is fed off the weak side of a ruck vs. England's BRNC squad. (Photo by: M.C. Ragsdale)

Britannia kicked off to start the second half and quickly had their guests reeling in their own end. Cleveland scrambled to clear the ball but was harassed with solid BRNC play. Within moments Cleveland's frustration resulted in striking a BRNC player and he was shown a yellow card. The Yanks were on their heels with a full fifteen and now had to defend with one in the sin bin. BRNC quickly found the overload off of a penalty

and sent #12 Dave “Chuck” Barry barreling wide right into the corner for the try which was converted. BRNC 7, USNA 5.



Yank Jumper Trevor McLemore skies after a lineout ball. (Photo by: M.C. Ragsdale)

The attending crowd was now very much back in the game and the Annapolis Mids responded with quickly rebuilding defense and aggressive running from their backs. Four and half minutes later #12 Michael Humara broke into the BRNC midfield and dished a timely pass to bursting wing Jimmy Markel. The BRNC fullback turned to give chase but the try was scored in the corner without contact. The kick was missed yielding a score of USNA 10, BRNC 7.

Play moved back and forth between the 22s with strong attacks from BRNC’s Barry and USNA’s Markel and Humara. With five minutes

to go the Yanks maintained the ball at the home team’s 22-meter line. Repetitive penalties on Barry helped keep it there as the Yank attack waned and Barry was ultimately sin binned for persistent infringement. With the mark placed two meters outside the 22, fly-half Rob Miller’s kick converted the penalty for a score of USNA 13, BRNC 7 which held as the final.

Navy may have come out the victor but no grudges were held; the Brits treated the Navy Gold to a fine after match meal replete with spirited singing and hijinks as only the Brits can pull off.



Officer Representative for USNA Rugby, Commander John Geisen (left) presents a Naval Academy image replete with the names of the touring team to Commodore Tim Harris of the BRNC as thanks for including the Naval Academy in their Centenary celebration. (Photo by: M.C. Ragsdale)

The BRNC rugby club looks to tour the United States around Easter of next year. Filling their dance card is sure to be Army in NY and Navy in Annapolis in addition to others. Navy has a tall order in trying to repay the gracious time they had in Dartmouth, but the Brits will be in store for an equally good time when they invade the USA.

~Bubba Lennerton